



## **California Coastal Commission**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Thousands of Kids Clean the Beach on Earth Day Send a Human "S.O.S." to Protect the Planet**

San Francisco, CA - In honor of Earth Day, 1,200 elementary school students from San Francisco scoured trash from Ocean Beach today as part of the Adopt-A-Beach Kids' Cleanup program. After cleaning the beach, the kids sent out a human S.O.S. by standing in formation of 100 foot tall letters to spell out "S.O.S" on the beach for an aerial photograph. Inside the letter "O", the kids created an image of the earth, with blue bags full of collected trash forming the oceans and kids forming the continents. The students' message was for grownups to take action to help "Save Our Seas" and protect the planet.

Sponsored by the California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail License Plate Program and the Malibu Foundation, the program targets schools in lower income areas where students may not have many opportunities to go to the beach. Earth Day Adopt-A-Beach Kids' Cleanups also took place at Dockweiler Beach in Los Angeles County and at Silver Strand State Beach in San Diego. Statewide, about 6,000 youth participated in the Cleanups.

All of the students cleaning the beach also participated in the Adopt-A-Beach School Assembly program prior to today's event. Through the Assembly program the students learned about ocean pollution and the effect of marine debris on wildlife. After the Assembly, the kids participated in a recycling program to raise money for a bus to transport them to the beach clean-up. "The program educates kids about how marine debris can affect wildlife and the ocean environment, and motivates them to do something about it. The kids are helping out by cleaning the beach and sending a message that everyone needs to do their part," said John Quigley, Program Coordinator.

(MORE)

The Adopt-A-Beach Kids' Cleanup program is funded statewide by sales of the Coastal Commission's Whale Tail License Plate. "The Whale Tail Plate is a way for every California driver to support coastal and marine education programs such as this Earth Day event," said Chris Parry, Manager of the Coastal Commission's Public Education Program. Sales of the whale tail license plates have raised \$600,000 for marine education to date. For information about the whale tail plates or the California Coastal Commission's educational programs, call (800) COAST-4U.

California Coastal Commissioner Christina Desser welcomed the students, talking to them about the history of Earth Day. Francesca Vietor, Executive Director of the San Francisco Department of the Environment, attended to announce the launch of Ocean Beach Day and the Mayor's Kid's Global Warming Art and Essay Contest. Corpsmembers from the San Francisco Conservation Corps were also on hand to help lead the beach clean-up. Other groups instrumental in coordinating the 1999 event were Friends of Ocean Beach, the United States Coast Guard, the Surfrider Foundation, the San Francisco Recycling Program and the Beach Chalet Community Fund.

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